

Closure Report

Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2019 to 2022

A Strategy to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation in Rotherham
(Child Exploitation includes Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal
Exploitation, Radicalisation, Modern slavery, Human Trafficking and Honour
Based Violence)

Purpose and introduction

The purpose of this paper is to update Cabinet of progress made against the Child Sexual Explication strategy 2019-2022 at point of closing. To provide an update of next steps for development of a CE strategy 2024-2029, along with the governance and scrutiny arrangements for its execution.

Rotherham's 2019-2022 Strategy was developed by the multi-agency partnership under the auspices of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (RSCP). The strategy was published five years following the Jay report, whilst it was published after the national strategy, it follows key aims:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Children
- Support to Victims and Survivors
- Learning & Development
- Child Protection and Detection of Crime

The strategy highlighted the strategic commitment to how the Rotherham Partnership would work together to address CSE in Rotherham in relation to historical and current victims. The delivery of the strategy on an operational level is reflected in the development and evolution of the EVOLVE service. This comprised of a multi-agency Service created to offer a preventative, investigative and safeguarding response to children at risk of, and who have been or are being abused through CSE. The key tenets of the strategy were that the child was at the centre and the key 5 objectives under the amils were to PREVENT; PROTECT children; PURSUE perpetrators; PROVIDE support to victims – historical and recent and to ensure we hear their voices (PARTICIPATION).

The EVOLVE service, true to its name, continued to evolve from an investigative team to a service that fully supports the Rotherham's 5 Ps through partnership working. It is a multi-agency team, with social care and police working jointly and co-located. Their work spanned not only the identification of victims and perpetrators but included preventative activities and awareness raising.

Progress and Achievements

1 Safeguarding Vulnerable Children - Responding to Child Exploitation

Achievements

- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is now included within the remit of Evolve alongside Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), creating a singular Child Exploitation pathway, staffing has increased to meet the demands of both CSE and CCE under one pathway of Child Exploitation.
- Missing – Through positive work with children, residential homes, and foster carers the number of Looked After Children who go missing has significantly reduced, alongside repeat episodes, with the year ending on the lowest number of LAC children reported as missing throughout the year.
- Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE replaced the RAM - Risk Assessment Management). The change brought Rotherham into line with national

terminology ensuring that those in attendance at the meeting, including partners from across a regional border, understood the remit of the meeting.

A single pathway for all Child Exploitation has ensured a simple referral process that is understood by all. A single pathway draws upon the successful interventions developed under CSE and applied these methods to CCE which has benefitted children at risk of both types of exploitation. This approach has allowed agencies to raise awareness of all types of child exploitation and ensure that children at risk of all CE are identified, seen as children at risk of harm, and ensure that safeguards are available to all children and young people affected by all types of exploitation. The referral numbers and interventions provided supports this assessment.

The approach to missing has seen a reduction in the number of children reported missing, and a reduction the number of episodes for individual children. This has ensured the most vulnerable children are supported.

There are established multi-agency processes for managing risk around CE, in line with local and national procedures. This includes managing pieces of information and intelligence which may contribute to the identification of children and young people at risk, or in the identification of perpetrators.

Ongoing actions

- Preventative work is undertaken with regular high risk missing young people on a 1:1 basis to safeguard, provide intervention, build a relationship, and to look at diversionary activities.

2 Support to Victims and Survivors - Post Abuse Support, Child Sexual Exploitation commissioned services for victims and survivors

Achievements

- Consultative referral pathway through the Trauma and Resilience Service (TRS) which is delivered through RDaSH and funded by the CCG. Using this pathway, professionals can refer cases into these services, and TRS will allocate cases to the specific service above according to available capacity and specialisms.

Survivors and victims have received a service around their needs at the time they require it. The TRS is independently evaluated annually by Sheffield Hallam university, which heavily focuses on the voices of those accessing the services. This informs of the need to continue to provide this support and meet the needs identified.

Ongoing actions

- Post Abuse Support, Child Sexual Exploitation commissioned services for victims and survivors. The service is an all-age service; however, this is predominantly to serve transition working as there is an internal pathway of support within the Council for under 18s.

3 Learning & Development - Awareness Raising and Training

Achievements

- Annual Members Session - Introduction to Child Exploitation, tackling it in Rotherham.
- Safeguarding Awareness Week (SAW) - Child Exploitation and County lines training delivered by RMBC and SYP - 31 events available to book onto with 615 staff across Rotherham registered attending.
- Dez Holmes, Director of Research in Practice - Transitional Safeguarding.
- The Evolve service continues to raise awareness through delivering of Child Exploitation training on a quarterly basis. In total we have trained 150 staff. In addition to this the team have attended team meetings, and a variety of schools to raise awareness.
- Child Exploitation Awareness Day on 18th March 2022.
- The Spot the Signs campaign was refreshed for Safeguarding Awareness Week (SAW21) in November 2021. Social media posts were shared via RMBC and reached over 18,000 people, and over 400 people visiting the link provided in the posts to the RMBC Child Protection web page.
- Digital Safety is a key concern regarding Child exploitation. Training has been delivered to over 60 professionals

Awareness raising is a key safeguarding activity and impacts on the number of intelligence reports to the police, and referrals to Children's Services. For example following a campaign by the police the number of intelligence reports increased for consideration at intelligence meetings. It informs of the correct referral pathways, how to spot the signs, and prevention activities that can be undertaken to prevent exploitation.

Ongoing actions

- The Evolve service continues to raise awareness through delivering of Child Exploitation training on a quarterly basis.

4 Child Protection and Detection of Crime - Operation Keep Safe

Achievements

- Operation Keepsafe – Early Help and South Yorkshire Police led on Keepsafe Interventions in 2021 and 2022, including during SAW 2021 and 2022, across the Borough including:
 - Blackburn Meadows/Nature Reserve
 - Ferham Park and Bradgate Park
 - Canklow
 - Rotherham Interchange and Town Centre McDonalds
 - St Johns Green/Kimberworth Park
 - Kimberworth/South Street/Deepdale MUGA
 - Clifton Park
 - Eastwood
 - Springwell Gardens

- Wellgate
- Thorpe Hesley
- Greasbrough
- Wingfield

Teams from Early Help Outreach and Engagement, Evolve, Evolve Police and Neighbourhood Police visited the above areas late at night to identify young people out and ensure their safety. Children and young people out were returned home and safe and well check undertaken, advice provided.

- Operation Makesafe is a national initiative that originated in South Yorkshire, to raising awareness of child sexual exploitation within the hotel & leisure industry. South Yorkshire Police have extended the approach to taxis, takeaways, and other vulnerable locations. The initiative focuses on training people working within these sectors to be aware of the early warning signs of CSE, encouraging them to report concerns to the police. Joint action with RMBC community safety and licensing – overcoming challenges due to Covid 19 lockdowns. Staff training video produced – Public and private versions. Posters and literature to accompany for display in staff areas - Based around 'spot the Signs' campaign. Seeking signed confirmation from premises that staff have viewed video and materials are being displayed. Seeking consent to carry out covert resilience/response testing

Ongoing actions

- Operation Keepsafe will continue to provide interventions jointly with the police to raise awareness and keep children in communities safe.
- Operation Makesafe will continue the above activities. The launch of a new Operation Makesafe national training package. Work will continue by SYP and RMBC community safety team to carry out engagement work with relevant premises to raise awareness of the signs of exploitation and what action to take should they have concerns.

5 Operation Stovewood

Achievements

- Mapping of support services was undertaken to ensure pathway for support was available to victims and survivors at point of need
- Streamlining of support referral pathway completed for the victims, survivors to access support.
- Meetings co-ordinated with Trauma & Resilience Service / Mothers for Justice Representatives and voluntary Consortium – partnership to support mothers/children of suspects arrested under Operation Stovewood

Next steps

In the process of developing a 2024-2029 CE strategy by the Child Exploitation Delivery Group (CEDG). This has been commissioned by the Rotherham



Safeguarding Children's partnership (RSCP) and will be presented for sign off by the Rotherham safeguarding Children Partnership and Endorsement by Cabinet.

Once this strategy has received sign off a delivery plan will be developed providing the detail around success factors and baselines, to drive the 2024-2029 strategy. This document is owned by the RSCP.

The Delivery Plan will provide the RSCP the detail to agree to the annual tactical action plan which will be owned and managed through CEDG.